



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



T here is still one thing you lack (Luke 18:22)

This line might ring a bell for most of you. It's from the Gospel of Luke (Lk 18:18-23), the story of the rich man who asks Jesus what he needs to do to inherit eternal life. First Jesus admonishes the poor guy for calling Him "Good Master", for "no one is good but God alone." Then He reminds him of a few commandments, to which the unnamed rich man responds, "I have kept all these since my earliest days." But what comes next is pretty funny. Reading his heart, Jesus tells the man that there's still one thing he lacks...just one little, itty, bitsy thing. That *one* thing just happens to be: selling *everything* he owns.



Let's step inside the character of this anonymous aristocrat and see what's going on here. Could Jesus' seemingly unfair correction be calling us to examine our own conscience? Have we ever secretly considered ourselves good, taking credit for and finding gratification in our virtuous acts? Jesus does recognize our sincere desire for holiness, yet knows that we're often unwilling to go beyond the bare minimum to obtain it. Mark's account (Mk 10:17-22) of the same story adds something even more beautiful to the scene. Before Jesus tells the rich man to go sell everything and follow Him, He "looked steadily at him and was filled with love for him." Seeing our misery, our weakness, God still loves us and believes in us. He continues to challenge us, push us further on the road to perfection, and lay out for us the key to obtaining happiness here on earth as well as true treasure in Heaven. But it will require that one last thing keeping each of us from giving ourselves totally to the Lord.

As St. John of the Cross so perfectly put it: "It makes little difference whether a bird is tied by a thin thread or by a cord. For even if tied by a thread, the bird will be prevented from taking off just as surely as if it were tied by a cord – that is, it will be impeded from flight as long as it does not break the thread...This is the lot of a man who is attached to something; no matter how much virtue he has, he will not reach the freedom of the divine union." And if divine union cannot be achieved, we certainly could never hope to live fully in the Divine Will either.



Yes, we all must learn to detach from material things (whether good, bad, or indifferent). That's why the Church encourages us to focus on almsgiving and the renunciation of some specific pleasure during the Lenten season. However, Jesus doesn't want us to stop there. He doesn't just want the forty-day fast from coffee or chocolate (or whatever it is that you've given up). He wants what we haven't given up yet, what we're still unwilling to let go of. And like the rich man, that single thread, that one thing is probably going to be a big one. In fact, we could probably all place it under the same label, as well: PRIDE. But unless we put everything in that heavy trunk up for sale, we will always find ourselves in the same rut, unable to truly follow Jesus and inherit the great kingdom He has prepared for us. We will be like that foolish youth who "went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth."



Here's a little spiritual grease to keep the wheels of Lent in motion. Let these prayers and teachings speak to your heart and rest in your soul. Set aside time each day for deep, silent prayer, allowing Jesus to enter into the depths of your being without any other noise competing for your attention. The more you invite Him into all of your acts each day, the more He will show you the areas of your life that need to change. And be faithful and attentive - ready to give your Fiat, your "let it be done unto me," when the Lord sends us the daily remedies which none of us ever lack.

Hmm...where do I fit in here?

"My daughter...there are many good souls who do much for Me – but how difficult it is to find one who gives Me everything so that I may give all of Myself. Some retain a little bit of love of self, some self-esteem, some a particular affection (be it even for holy people), some a little vanity. Some retain a little bit of attachment to the earth, some to interest. In sum, some a little thing, some another – all keep something of their own, and this impedes that everything be divine in them...Therefore, their much doing will not be able to...please Me as much as the little doing of one who keeps nothing for herself, and who gives herself completely to Me."

(Jesus to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Vol. 6, 2/7/1904)

No room for excuses

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly. To anyone who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek as well; to anyone who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask for your property back from someone who takes it. Treat others as you would like people to treat you. If you love those who love you, what credit can you expect? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit can you expect? For even sinners do that much. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to get money back, what credit can you expect? Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount. Instead, love your enemies and do good to them, and lend without any hope of return. You will have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High, for He Himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive and you will be forgiven...Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own?...Take the log out of your own eye first, and then you will see clearly enough to take out the splinter in your brother's eye...Good people draw what is good from the store of goodness in their hearts; bad people draw what is bad from the store of badness. For the words of the mouth flow out of what fills the heart." (Luke 6:27-37, 41-45)



For the nightstand

Litany of Humility

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart, **Hear me.**
 From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.
 From the desire of being loved...
 From the desire of being extolled ...
 From the desire of being honored ...
 From the desire of being praised ...
 From the desire of being preferred to others...
 From the desire of being consulted ...
 From the desire of being approved ...
 From the fear of being humiliated ...
 From the fear of being despised...
 From the fear of suffering rebukes ...
 From the fear of being calumniated ...
 From the fear of being forgotten ...

From the fear of being ridiculed ...
 From the fear of being wronged ...
 From the fear of being suspected ...
 That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.
 That others may be esteemed more than I ...
 That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase and I may decrease ...
 That others may be chosen and I set aside ...
 That others may be praised and I unnoticed ...
 That others may be preferred to me in everything...
 That others may become holier than I, provided that I may become as holy as I should...

When is the last time you've been to Confession?

Even if you're not in a state of mortal sin, the Church teaches that "confession of everyday faults (venial sins) is nevertheless strongly recommended...Indeed the *regular* confession of our venial sins helps us to form our conscience, fight against evil tendencies, let ourselves be healed by Christ, and progress in the life of the Spirit. By receiving more frequently through this sacrament the gift of the Father's mercy, we are spurred to be merciful as He is merciful." (CCC 1458).

And in His temple all cry, "Glory!" (*Ps 29:9*)

If we lined up all of the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will and had you guess which one of us served in the military, you probably would never have picked our youngest in the religious life and smallest in stature – Esther (Eun Young) Choi. At least that's what she used to be called before Heaven changed her uniform and name last February 2nd, Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Esther was no stranger to change, a definite plus for anyone seeking to abandon themselves completely in the Will of God. She immigrated to Germany from South Korea as a teenager, spending the beginning of her high school years in a foreign country, studying in an unfamiliar language. Her family later settled in New York, where she finished school in yet another language, started on her nursing degree, and took an internship at a hospital more than an hour and a half away from home...*providentially*.

Looking for something to read that summer during her commute to work, Esther grabbed a random book from home, one that someone had given her father at a Legion of Mary meeting back in Germany. However, our most seemingly random choices are always perfectly planned out by God, for that book – *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will* – began Esther's life-changing journey into the Divine Will. She couldn't stop turning the pages and later found out it was written by Luisa Piccarreta – a Servant of God who had made a deep impression on her a while back when she "by chance" read a little about her extraordinary life. And as Our Lady continued to foster the desire to live in God's Most Holy Will in Esther's heart, the seed of a religious vocation was being nurtured there as well.

After a two and a half year tour of duty as a soldier in the U.S. Army followed by four years of nursing in New York City, the time of preparation in the divine plan was finally complete. The biggest change of Esther's life awaited her in a little town called Talamello, where her future Spouse was calling her to be part of a new family of sisters all seeking the same goal: giving glory to God at every moment. Being born on Christmas Eve to boot, it only seemed fitting that the young postulant begin her novitiate with the new name – **Sister Gloria Marie of the Holy Family**. As Mother Gabrielle Marie cut her hair, clothed her with the white habit, and armed her side with the weapon of the Most Holy Rosary, Sister Gloria didn't give a second thought to the very exciting life she had lead in the past. For now she would not only be serving, but engaging herself to the Lord of armies, the true King of glory.

"To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; too seek Him, the greatest of adventures; to find Him, the greatest human achievement." – St. Augustine



Ready for the same adventure? If you feel God may be calling you to the religious life, visit the "Vocations" page of our website or drop us an email at daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com.

Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of His faithful ones

(Psalm 116:15)

Loss is always hard for us, humanly speaking. And there's nothing wrong with that. Our sorrow can be a healthy expression of the love God placed in our hearts for the people He chose to place in our lives for His glory and the fulfillment of His Will. But for those of us with faith in the promise of eternal life, that sorrow should be mixed with and eventually evolve into great gratitude and joy. Joy for the souls of our loved ones finally returning home to their Father and joy for God, who has kept every creature in His mind from the beginning and longs to have each of us enjoy eternal beatitude with Him in Heaven. So please join us in praying for and celebrating two of the Lord's faithful ones who passed away back in February, yet continue to hold special places in the hearts of the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will.

Msgr. Vincent A. Keane

(September 10, 1932 – February 5, 2019)

Anyone who has ever met "Fr. Keane" (as Monsignor always referred to himself) would all agree on the same thing – that this man was a living saint. His loving, gentle, humble spirit didn't shout sanctity with bells and whistles, but rather made you feel like you were in the company of Christ Himself. For over fifty years our Sister Maureen had the privilege of knowing this simple priest from Queens, NY, with whom she shared much prayer, countless Masses and, in the latter part of his life, the great gift of living in the Divine Will. God indeed rewarded his precious shepherd's many years of faithful service to the Church as pastor, teacher, and spiritual director by saving the best for last.



Sr. Maureen, Msgr. Keane,
& Sr. Francesca

Though Msgr. Keane was never without the cross, the last couple of years of his life were particularly marked with physical sufferings, though he never complained. He found great comfort in listening to Sister Maureen read the *Hours of the Passion* to him over the phone. When asked if he was tired, Monsignor would reply, "Yes I am, Sister, but I don't want you to stop." On the day before he died, Sister Maureen felt inspired to visit her longtime friend and fellow Benedictine of Divine Will (for he was among the first priests to make the Oblate Consecration back in 2016)... a moment she later described as an extraordinary privilege. And as they did so many times in the past, Sister and Monsignor prayed together in the Divine Will.

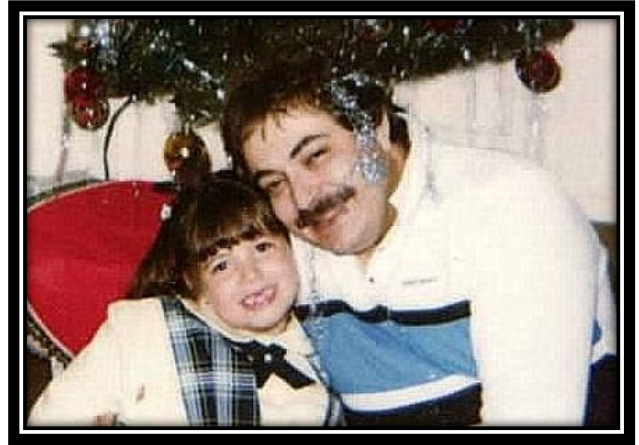
Sister Maureen went through all of Msgr. Keane's acts of holy priesthood the past sixty years that Jesus had done perfectly for him, purifying, sanctifying, and transforming each and every one into divine acts which would precede him into Heaven. She reminded Monsignor that they were all infinite and eternal, every Confession and absolution, every Holy Mass and Communion, every instruction and homily (always centered on the Blessed Mother and the Eucharist), every single sacrament. With peace radiating from his holy face, Msgr. Keane silently smiled and nodded, as he was unable to speak audibly. When our Divine Lord at last fulfilled His promise to take Monsignor to Himself, Sister Maureen's sadness in the presence of her dear friend's extreme suffering was immediately replaced by joyful gratitude. As she gently kissed his anointed right hand in the coffin, her heart was filled with delight knowing that, for all eternity, everyone in Heaven will recognize him as a Divine Will priest.

«I was praying for a dying soul...when my loveable Jesus came and told me: "*My daughter...don't you know that for each word on My Passion, for each thought, compassion, reparation, memory of my pains – as many paths of electric communication open between Me and the soul, and therefore the soul keeps adorning herself with as many different beauties? She has done the **Hours of My Passion**, and I will receive her as daughter of My Passion, clothed with My blood and adorned with My wounds. This flower has grown inside your heart, so I bless it and receive it in My Heart as a favorite flower.*"»
(Luisa Piccarreta, *Book of Heaven*, Vol. 12, 7/12/1918)

Vito A. Marcone

(June 13, 1950 – February 7, 2019)

When Sister Francesca's father was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure two years ago, she made a secret deal with God: *"Ok, Lord, I know he belongs to You. Take him when You want...but I want to be able to say good-bye."* So when she got that much dreaded call from her sister after Vito had suffered unexpected and life-threatening complications from a hip fracture, Sister thought this was the answer to her prayers. But she underestimated God's goodness. Landing in New York on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, she was greeted with the happy news that dad was miraculously making some progress. He had a long road to recovery, but the doctors were hopeful that he was going to make it. And he did...for two more months.



Sister Francesca watched her father suffer a great deal those two months, in so many different ways. But she also witnessed first-hand what she had read so many times in the Divine Will writings about the power of the cross, how it *"seals God in the soul in such a way that there is never separation between God and the crucified soul"* (Vol. 3, 4/21/1900). During the last weeks of his life, Vito desired nothing but prayer. In the middle of the night when he couldn't sleep or during the day at moments of more intense suffering, the Italian-American from the Bronx could often be found shouting out to "his Jesus", not in desperation, but with confidence. Vito would tell Him that He loved Him, thank Him for the second chance he was getting, cry out to Him for help, or ask Jesus to show him the way to the Father. At one point he turned to his daughter and said, *"You know, you often feel like a pretty bad person, but when you get to the point of life and death, it's that total trust in Jesus in the depth of your soul that saves you. Now I know, nothing in this life matters except our relationship with Him."*



So until the very end, Our Lord and Our Lady utilized every minute that Their little son had left on earth, preparing him to become a saint. His already generous, self-sacrificing spirit became even more radiant as he constantly thought of others from his hospital bed, despite being in the midst of his own agony. Typical of his comedic personality, he was cracking jokes until his last day, forgetting himself and making all those around him laugh. Vito spent many sleepless nights not with the television on, but listening to a scriptural rosary app. Once while praying with his daughter, eyes closed and fingers clenching the beads, he marveled at how clearly he could envision the Blessed Mother: *"Her face is clearer than I've ever seen Her in my entire life!"* The simple, faithful Catholic was anointed several times and confessed as often as a priest came by. Sister Francesca was particularly touched to see how much her father longed to receive Holy Communion and how Jesus always satisfied

that desire, even when dad found himself in some of the most humiliating situations. But that's what God does...He comes down to us at our lowest.

Vito Marcone eventually passed away on the morning of February 7th, with the brown scapular around his neck, surrounded by his two daughters, mother, and sister who prayed and sang hymns until his heart just stopped beating. Nine priests concelebrated his funeral mass on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. In the end, Sister Francesca didn't just get a few moments to say good-bye to her father as she originally thought. Her merciful Spouse allowed her two months to be by his side with the rest of her family who loved him so very much. So be careful what you pray for because God may just grant you so much more.

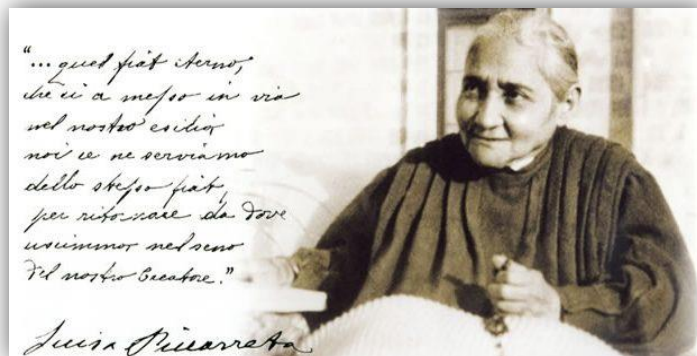
"How beautiful you are! But how much more does your beauty grow in your suffering! Oh, how dear you are to Me! My eyes are wounded in looking at you because they see My very image in you."

(Jesus to Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Vol. 3, 4/24/1900)

Looking to dive into the Divine Will, too? Visit the "Family Tree" page of our website and scroll down to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, for a treasure-trove of resources to get you started.

Make sure to download *The 24 Hours of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* before Lent ends as well as *The Virgin Mary in the Kingdom of the Divine Will* to get set for the month of May.

When you're ready for Luisa's *Book of Heaven*, her 36-volume diary, just drop us an email and we'll get you started.



Lenten Alms



If you feel called to help support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will this Lenten and Easter season or on a regular basis, visit the "Donations" page of our website to make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or to sign up for automatic monthly contributions: www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org

Or simply send a check or money order to the address of our non-profit organization below:
(All donations are tax-deductible)

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Be assured that we've been praying and sacrificing for the needs and intentions of all of our benefactors this Lent. In additional thanksgiving for your goodness to us, Holy Mass will also be offered during the Easter Season for each and every one of you who have so generously supported us in any way, shape, or form.



With much love
and many
blessings for a
happy and holy
Easter
from all of the
Benedictine
Daughters of
Divine Will!